

OFFICE OF WARD 1 COUNCILMEMBER BRIANNE K. NADEAU
COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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Statement of Introduction
Speed Management on Arterials (SMART) Signage Amendment Act of 2022
February 18, 2022

Today, along with Councilmembers Anita Bonds, Janeese Lewis George, Robert C. White, Jr., and Charles Allen, I am introducing the Speed Management on Arterials (“SMART”) Signage Amendment Act of 2022. This bill will contribute to the District’s mission to reduce and ultimately eliminate major injuries and fatal crashes on our arterial streets – which constitute less than a quarter of our roadways but account for [close to 70 percent](#) of pedestrians struck by vehicles.

The SMART Signage Amendment Act of 2022 sets the standard speed limit on major and minor arterial roads at 25 miles per hour, and requires the District Department of Transportation (“DDOT”) to implement three changes to posted signage:

1. Speed limit signs on arterials must be posted at a frequency no fewer than 4 per mile;
2. New, clearer signage must be developed notifying corridors and locations where automated traffic enforcement (such as speed cameras) are in effect, and;
3. Major entryways to DC from neighboring states must have new signage alerting drivers to traffic safety laws.

Currently, arterial speed limits are inconsistent and often inequitable; they can range from 35 mph on New York Avenue, NE, to 30 mph on Georgia Avenue, NW, to 25 mph on minor arterials like Foxhall Road, NW.

Simply put, we should not be allowing for speeds on arterials that pose a serious risk to pedestrians, especially when a vehicle must be traveling at 11 miles over the posted limit to be issued a speed camera citation. That means on a street like New York Avenue, a vehicle can be going 45 miles per hour before getting cited, a speed at which a pedestrian [will only have a 50 percent chance of surviving](#) if struck. In fact, lowering arterial speed limits to 25 mph was a goal in the original [DC Vision Zero Action Plan](#).

Speed limit signage on DC’s arterials is woefully inadequate. On many of our arterials, there can be a mile or more between posted signs. While posting more speed limit signs is no substitute for a redesigned street, controlled studies have shown that [simply increasing the frequency of signage can have significant effects](#): a 22% reduction in crashes, and a 54% reduction in drivers going >20 mph over the limit.

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The same goes for automated traffic enforcement notification. I imagine many drivers never take notice of the small “photo enforced” signs occasionally posted throughout the District. The goal of our automated enforcement program is to reduce dangerous driving, not simply to issue fines, and if a driver does not get a ticket because they were made aware of a camera, that should be considered a success.

Finally, on almost all major entryways to the District, there is very little guidance given on DC’s traffic safety laws. This is especially concerning given how many out-of-state drivers come to and through DC every day. If we are passing best practice traffic safety laws, it makes little difference if a significant number of drivers are never made aware of them.

While we still have a long way to go towards designing fully safer streets, making the rules we already have clear and well-known is an important step we must take. I look forward to working with my colleagues on advancing this legislation.

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3 Councilmember Anita Bonds


Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau

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9 Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.


Councilmember Janeese Lewis George

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15 Councilmember Charles Allen

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18 A BILL

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22 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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26 To amend The District of Columbia Traffic Act to set the speed limit on major and minor arterial
27 streets to 25 miles per hour or less, to prohibit a motor vehicle operator from making a
28 right turn when facing a red traffic control signal and require the Department of
29 Transportation to erect appropriate signage, to allow the Department of Transportation to
30 permit a right turn on red at an intersection with rationale, to require that speed limit
31 signs on major arterials be posted at a rate of 4 signs per mile, and to require the posting
32 of signs within 1,000 ft. of a bordering state in the direction of travel entering the District
33 that alert a motor vehicle operator of traffic safety laws.

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35 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

36 That this act may be cited as the “Speed Management on Arterials Signage Amendment Act of
37 2022”.

38 Sec. 2. The District of Columbia Traffic Act, 1925, approved March 3, 1925 (43 Stat.
39 1119; codified in scattered cites of the D.C. Official Code), is amended as follows:

40 (a) Section 9(a) (D.C. Official Code § 50-2201.04(a)) is amended by adding a new
41 paragraph (3) to read as follows:

“ (3) Notwithstanding paragraph (4) of this subsection, the speed limit on a street classified by the District Department of Transportation as minor arterial or principal arterial shall be 25 miles per hour or less.

“ (4) The District Department of Transportation may permit speeds higher than 25 miles per hour on principal arterials with no abutting residential or commercial land uses and which share characteristics with limited-access highways.

(b) A new section 9f is added to read as follows:

“Sec. 9f. Traffic control at entryways and on major arterials.

“ (a) The District Department of Transportation (“DDOT”) shall post speed limit signs on streets classified as DDOT as major arterials at a rate of no fewer than 4 signs per mile.

“ (b) DDOT shall establish standards for signage posted in advance of automated traffic enforcement locations, and for corridors on which automated traffic enforcement is used, that clearly communicate the presence and use of automated enforcement.

“ (c) On all streets classified by DDOT as minor arterials, major arterials, freeways, expressways, or interstates that cross into a bordering state, DDOT shall erect signs within 1,000 ft. of a bordering state in the direction of travel entering the District that alert a motor vehicle operator of the following information:

“ (A) The default speed limit on District streets as prescribed in section 9(a).

“ (B) That the District uses automated traffic enforcement;

“ (C) That there are restrictions on mobile phone and headphone use while operating a motor vehicle in the District, as prescribed in section 4 of the Distracted Driving Safety Act of 2004 (D.C. Law 15-124; D.C. Official Code § 50-1731.04); and

64 “(D) The use of public transportation is encouraged in the District, with
65 directional signage to the nearest park-and-ride facility.”.

66 Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

67 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
68 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,
69 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

70 Sec. 4. Effective date.

71 This act shall take effect after approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
72 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
73 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
74 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
75 Columbia Register.